



CITY OF HOUSTON
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Strategic Procurement Division

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May 3, 2016

SUBJECT: Letter of Clarification No. 3

REFERENCE: RFP No.: S67- T25785 Disaster Recovery

TO: All Prospective Proposers

CLARIFICATION NO. 3

FOR

**REFERENCE: SOLICITATION NO.: S67-T25785
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FOR DISASTER RECOVERY**

The following changes and/or revisions are incorporated into the above referenced RFP Document as noted. All other provisions and requirements as originally set forth remain enforce and are binding.

1. The following questions and requests for clarification were submitted in accordance with the instructions provided in **PART VI - INSTRUCTION TO PROPOSERS, B. Additional Information and Specification Changes.** Communications between the City and Respondents. The City's response (**in bold italics**) follows each question or request for clarification in the table below:

CLARIFICATIONS TO QUESTIONS

Vendor Question 1:	Can the language in the RFQ be amended to include the following scope: CDBG funding coordination and Pre-grant services? The services would only be needed if necessary or desired after each disaster event, but the inclusion of the language the RFQ complies with HUD requirements for the selection of the consultants and use of HUD funds as they are allocated for disaster recovery.
COH Response:	<i>We will not alter the scope for this specialty area of expertise.</i>
Vendor Question 2:	Can we add labor rates for categories of staff that may be used in the performance of services likely for under this solicitation?
COH Response:	<i>Any labor rates provided must be in addition to the Labor Category/Title listed on page 20 of the RFP. Failure to complete the listed categories in lieu of providing alternate categories and titles will be considered an incomplete submission. The purpose of the Labor Category/Title</i>

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	<i>framework is to create a basis for comparison between proposals. The listing includes the most common titles related to the scope of work requested. We recognize some applicants may have specialized assets within their organization and we welcome additions to the list on page 20 of the RFP.</i>
Vendor Question 3:	Can you define criteria for selection of multiple consultants and are there a maximum number of selections that would be envisioned?
COH Response:	<i>We will not be providing the criteria for selection outside of what is listed in Part III, Section D. of the RFP. At this time we have not concluded whether we will select one or multiple consultants.</i>
Vendor Question 4:	Can you define how the selected consultant will used in the insurance claim process? Based on Hurricane Ike PWE experience, insurance negotiations overlapped with potential FEMA claims and there was a resulting gap on potential FEMA reimbursements that were never pursued.
COH Response:	<i>The city will negotiate a process with the successful proposer for reconciling FEMA reimbursement with insurance claims."</i>
Vendor Question 5:	Will the disaster recovery work commence as soon as contract awarded?
COH Response:	<i>A task order will be issued as needed. This may be as soon as the contract is awarded or until services are required.</i>
Vendor Question 5:	Will the contract also include services for preparedness and planning activities that may or may not involve FEMA preparedness funding?
COH Response:	<i>No, the efforts are strictly for cost recovery.</i>
Vendor Question 6	In addition to FEMA PA and Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, what other federal programs, if any, does the City expect the contractor would support?
COH Response:	<i>The contractor will be utilized primarily on the FEMA PA program which may also include advice on HMGP related issues</i>
Vendor Question 7:	What is the relationship of this procurement to the Request for Information entitled Disaster Management Consulting Services (I00600)?
COH Response:	<i>The RFI was issued to obtain the services available and utilize the information to develop this RFP to procure the services.</i>
Vendor Question 8:	How many Project Worksheets has the City managed in each of the last five years?
COH Response:	<i>Approx. 500 PW have been managed for IKE and under 15 for Memorial Day Flood 2015. We do not have a breakdown by year available.</i>
Vendor Question 9:	Please confirm that it is the proposer's responsibility to determine which personnel are "key". If not the proposer's responsibility, which positions does the City consider "key"?
COH Response:	<i>The successful contractor will propose the key personnel and the City will review, it will be a mutual understanding and agreement and will be part of the task order.</i>
Vendor Question 10:	Is there an incumbent for this RFP or with similar scope of work? If, yes, please list the current contractor and describe the task current contractor is assigned.
COH Response:	<i>City had two contractors in the past with a somewhat similar scope of work. The contract is expired or about to expire. We don't know if the same vendors are interested in the current RFP or not. This bidding process will be a new start.</i>
Vendor Question 11:	Section B (Submission Requirements), Item 4 (Qualifications of the Proposer) (page 12) requires proposers to provide a list of seven (7) project references, however, the form

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	provided in Exhibit I Reference/List of Previous Customers) only provides space for four (4) references. Additionally, the information required in the solicitation does not match the fields of the form. Would the City like proposers to provide seven references in the “Qualifications of the Proposer” section and provide four references on the provided form? If not, please clarify how the City would like references to be presented.
COH Response:	<i>We apologize for any typo/oversight, SPD will add the lines and/or please feel free to add the lines yourself. Please provide seven (7) project references.</i>
Vendor Question 12:	Section B (Submission Requirements), Item 4 (Qualifications of the Proposer) (page 12) requires proposers to provide “at least three (3) references for projects where key personnel performed in a similar role.” All of the references provided by our firm have been staffed by the same personnel that we are proposing—is this requirement just ensuring that the references we provide reflect our team, or is this requiring that we provide three references for each resume? In our experience, we have found that requiring references for each team member does not necessarily reflect recent experience (professional references usually have new positions or may be retired) and that the firm’s recent references also speak to the personnel’s capability. Would the City consider removing this provision?
COH Response:	<i>The intent is to have contractor provide the trained professional with a positive track record and experience in handling disaster cost recovery. However, we will consider and review the details with the successful bidder in depth.</i>
Vendor Question 13:	In reference to the PART II – SCOPE OF WORK / TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS, Page 7, paragraph E. “The contractor hourly billing rate will be based on a rate which includes all expenses for contractor and services and billing should be for the following activities...” In accordance with the City’s RFP as referenced above, hourly rates are to be fully burdened to include all expenses. Please advise if the City will furnish any other resources, such as office space, telephone numbers, copiers, et cetera?
COH Response:	<i>City will provide the office space, desk phone, and copy facility.</i>
Vendor Question 14:	Does the city plan to make multiple awards under this solicitation?
COH Response:	<i>Based on responses to the RFP, the City may award multiple awards and issue task orders for each assignment.</i>
Vendor Question 15:	If so, how will work be segregated between awardees? Will awardees perform different services on the same projects or will awardees perform all services in the scope of work on different projects?
COH Response:	<i>Each Task Order may be specific to a Project Work Sheet or sets of Project Worksheets,</i>
Vendor Question 16:	Will the City select multiple qualified vendors and then re-compete individual task orders amongst the vendors selected?
COH Response:	<i>We may do that.</i>
Vendor Question 17:	Will the incumbent mentioned in the pre-bid meeting be conflicted out of this solicitation?
COH Response:	<i>This is a new RFP and all participants have equal chance of being selected neither incumbent nor any new participant will have any preference.</i>
Vendor Question 18:	Will contractors who hold FEMA public assistance consulting contracts with TDEM be conflicted out?

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COH Response:	<i>Conflict of Interest will be give due consideration at the time of selection/award.</i>
Vendor Question 19:	Will contractors who hold FEMA public assistance consulting contracts with FEMA be conflicted out?
COH Response:	<i>See above response to Q-18</i>
Vendor Question 20:	Can we add rate classifications beyond those specifically identified in the proposal in our cost proposal?
COH Response:	<i>You may if need to. Please see the response to Q-2.</i>
Vendor Question 21:	Is local travel for client services reimbursable, or to be included in our rates, i.e. from office to project sites or other city offices?
COH Response:	<i>No traveling, boarding and lodging costs will be reimbursed.</i>
Vendor Question 22:	Is rotation travel, lodging, and subsistence for non-local staff to be included in our rates?
COH Response:	<i>No rotational travel, lodging, and subsistence will be reimbursed. City only will pay the agreed hourly rates.</i>
Vendor Question 23:	If rotation travel, lodging, and subsistence is separate from labor billings, are markups allowed and is there a standard policy or rates, i.e. city of Houston travel policy, GSA, or similar?
COH Response:	<i>No rotational travel, lodging, and subsistence will be reimbursed. City only will pay the agreed hourly rates.</i>
Vendor Question 24:	For questions 6 thru 10 above, in the event of a future catastrophic disaster or if these costs are not to be included in the rate, will the city entertain negotiation of reimbursement terms for these issues on a task order basis?
COH Response:	<i>No</i>
Vendor Question 25:	What is the city's estimated immediate full-time equivalent staffing (FTE's) needed after notice to proceed on this contract?
COH Response:	<i>At least one project manager, any additional resources will be negotiated once the contract is awarded.</i>
Vendor Question 26:	How much office space is available for co-location of contractor staff with city staff and where would it be located?
COH Response:	<i>One cubicle, and occasional conference room with pre-arrangement.</i>
Vendor Question 27:	In the event insufficient co-location space is available, can cost reimbursable office space be acquired on a task order basis?
COH Response:	<i>No.</i>
Vendor Question 28:	Does the City foresee primarily staff augmentation for reimbursements and closeouts on existing disasters as the immediate need and less need for advocacy and grants maximization for current or future disasters?

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COH Response:	<i>We need more help on the advocacy and grants maximization for current disasters but may need help in staff augmentation in future disaster as needed, depending on the magnitude of disaster and needs at that time.</i>
Vendor Question 29:	In future events, does the city contemplate a full blown program management office with more direct service by the contractor to other city agencies, including services like: procurement support, construction management, engineering, and community outreach/relations?
COH Response:	<i>No, this RFP is strictly to augment our cost recovery efforts.</i>
Vendor Question 30:	Will the city consider adding to the scope of work “other consulting services, as needed”. In the event of a large or catastrophic event in the future, this would allow maximum utility at the task order level for unforeseen circumstances.
COH Response:	<i>We already have some broad verbatim to cover other consulting services, such as “not limited to” in describing the scope. We will not add additional redundant language.</i>
Vendor Question 31:	Will any specific scope of work contemplated by the City require a licensed CPA, i.e. would the firm or any individual require a CPA license?
COH Response:	<i>No</i>
Vendor Question 32:	Does the city prefer a licensed CPA firm or individual on the project team?
COH Response:	<i>No</i>
Vendor Question 33:	On page 5, the RFP states, “Within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt of a “Notice to Proceed” issued by Finance the selected Proposer shall have a representative present at a location specified by the City at no charge to the City.” Under the presumption here that the representative would be the project manager, deputy, or other individual that is a part of the project team, would there still be a restriction of paying for mobilization costs if this person is supporting the City’s efforts?
COH Response:	<i>We may negotiate that with the successful bidder.</i>
Vendor Question 34:	Will other departments be represented on the proposal review panel? a. If so, which departments?
COH Response:	<i>This procurement is for the Finance department.</i>
Vendor Question 35:	To the extent contractors are asked to follow the city’s travel policy, can you provide a copy of that policy with applicable approved rates for: mileage, subsistence, per diems, car rentals, and other incidental or miscellaneous expenses?
COH Response:	<i>Our policies are on the City’s website. However, we don’t foresee any such reimbursements. We will be compensating the contractor based on the fees listed only.</i>
Vendor Question 36:	Given that we plan to exceed the M/WBE target’s in the RFP, and the magnitude of the body of work which the RFP scope of work will be performed against and the uncertainty of future events, can a proposer identify a commitment M/WBE percentage without denominating a specific vendor?
COH Response:	<i>No. At submission time, Proposers must identify currently certified City of Houston MWBE companies to meet the advertised goal. To identify certified firms, use the</i>

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	<i>following link for the City's MWDBE certified firm directory: http://www.houstontx.gov/redirect/mwdb.html.</i>
Vendor Question 37:	If this is not allowed, can we identify several vendors with a range of values/percentages? Subcontractor utilization will be heavily dependent on the particular needs of various agencies, as well as the frequency, severity, and type of future events. Accurately predicting subcontractor need over a 3 to 5 year contract duration is simply not possible given the degree of unknowns at this time.
COH Response:	<i>The City of Houston's standard for MWBE goal compliance is good faith efforts as set forth in the City's written Good Faith Efforts Policy. Proposers, in creation of their MWBE participation plans, should make good faith efforts to identify certified MWBEs and designate percentages associated with the value of their anticipated work on the contract. During the course of the contract, the successful Proposer may leverage the MWBE goal deviation process if changes need to be made to their City Council approved MWBE participation plan.</i>
Vendor Question 38:	If a range of values are not allowed, will the City later accept substitutions or variances, if they are certified and overall targets are still being met?
COH Response:	<i>Substitutions or variances will be considered and evaluated on case-by-case basis according to the MWBE goal deviation process. A deviation form, available on the City's website at http://www.houstontx.gov/obo/, must be completed and submitted to the Office of Business Opportunity for consideration and determination.</i>
Vendor Question 39:	As is currently presented in the solicitation, the only specific federal disaster grants discussed are FEMA Public Assistance. If the City of Houston anticipates receiving and using additional funding sources, including grants from the HUD Community Development Block Grants for Disaster Recovery, Federal Transit Administration Emergency Relief program, Federal Highway Administration Emergency Relief program, and/or other federal programs, we recommend expanding the scope of services to include comprehensive disaster recovery grants management as a part of this contract.
COH Response:	<i>The current scope already has this leverage, may not have the name of funding source though. The language "but not limited to" establishes the flexibility to address this if necessary once the contract has been awarded and needs arise.</i>
Vendor Question 40:	Under Part II, the city notes that within 24 hours of a notice to proceed the "the selected Proposer shall have a representative present at a location specified by the City <i>at no charge to the City</i> "? Wouldn't this "charge" be part and parcel of our recovery contract? Is the charge specific to travel or is the charge specific to personnel hours, or both? Is the intent of this requirement that vendors should have a local presence so as to minimize travel? Conversely, is the intent of this question to minimize charge
COH Response:	<i>The intent is to minimize the charge and keep it simple.</i>
Vendor Question 41:	Under Part II, will planning tasks be included under training and development of city employees?
COH Response:	<i>Any training the City deems necessary will be part of the task order.</i>
Vendor Question 42:	Under Part III Section D, Evaluation Criteria, will Houston assign points with each of its "evaluation criteria"? Should we understand any one of these criteria (1-3) or sub-criteria (2a-2f) as being a more important evaluative factor than the others?

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COH Response:	<i>The each criteria has certain points, the review committee will assign those points. We will not be providing the assigned points prior to the submission deadline.</i>
Vendor Question 43:	Under Part IV Section B, can the city confirm that federal tax forms filed to the IRS is sufficient to support financial stability? If IRS forms are accepted, please confirm that a letter of opinion, balance sheet, schedules, and auditor's notes are not required
COH Response:	<i>Usually audited financial statements corroborate with tax returns as a good source for such evaluations.</i>
Vendor Question 44:	Under Part IV Section B, will the city confirm what information is required from M/WBE vendors?
COH Response:	<i>Part IV Section B number, it states the Proposer shall include all relevant information necessary to effectively perform the evaluation of the proposal as it relates to the submission requirements listed in this section.</i>
Vendor Question 45:	Should qualifications of M/WBE be presented under Section 6 M/WBE Participation or under Section 4 Qualifications of the Proposer?
COH Response:	<i>The qualifications of M/WBE should be presented on the forms attached within the RFP.</i>
Vendor Question 46:	Are seven references also required for all team members?
COH Response:	<i>The organization must provide a list of seven (7) references where similar in scope and complexity of work was performed.</i>

In accordance with Communications between the City and Respondents, the deadline for questions has passed. No additional questions will be answered prior to the proposal deadline except as the Chief Procurement Officer, in his sole discretion, deems to be in the best interest of the City.

END OF CLARIFICATION NO. 3

**CITY OF HOUSTON
STRATEGIC PROCUREMENT DIVISION**

**JOHN J. GILLESPIE
CHIEF PROCUREMENT OFFICER**

Should you have any additional questions or request further clarification regarding this Proposal, please contact Henry Lowery at henry.lowery@houstontx.gov, or at (832) 393-9131.

Sincerely,



Henry Lowery Jr.

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